

Sharp

SHARP'S OLDE
COUNTRY
STORE
& FREE MUSEUM

TOUR
INFO
CENTER

100 YEARS OF
NOSTALGIA

CLEAN
REST
ROOMS

HAND-DIPPED
ICE CREAM

Gasoline has risen from 21 cents to over a dollar and the gas company has changed its name, but otherwise things are pretty much the same at Sharp's Country Store. Located in Slatyfork on highway 219, this landmark general store has been in operation for over 100 years. Behind the gas pumps is a museum of the region, of the store itself, and of a family that has contributed to the rich heritage of Pocahontas County.

Founded by Luther David (L.D.) Sharp, the only son of Silas and Sarah Sharp, the store opened in his parent's home in 1884. At the early age of 12, L.D. began buying and selling fur, livestock and merchandise and for many years his merchandise was hauled from Millboro, Virginia, and Beverly by covered wagons. Mr. Sharp was the first postmaster of Slatyfork and gave it its name when the office opened. He was also one of the first group of apiary inspectors in West Virginia, and raised bees to

Old fashioned hand lettered signs lead the way to Sharp's

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Photo of Sharp's Store taken in 1927

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produce the famous Pocahontas County white lynn honey.

The area surrounding L. D.'s store saw fantastic changes in the years following his birth in 1872. The railroad, paved roads and automobiles, and the telephone, electric power, radio and television, all came to Slatyfork during the lifetime of this country storekeeper.

When the business outgrew his family's house, L. D. built his first store building. It was one room, made from lumber cut by loggers working the nearby mountains. The store was located on the old country road where it crossed Slatyfork Creek, the road that had been used by soldiers of the north and the south during the Civil War. As the one room became too small, a larger two-story building was constructed around and above it so business could continue uninterrupted.

Sharp's Store served an area of 15 miles, from Linwood to Elk Mountain. This was a large territory, considering travel conditions at that time. Goods arrived by horse and wagon over rutted dirt roads that were often muddy and treacherous. Men got together for the 60-mile journey to the train depot in Millboro, Virginia, or Beverly in Randolph County. They took food for several days, and heavy sheets to sleep on the ground or to cover their wagons in case of rain.

Before electricity was available, Sharp's Store was lit with oil lanterns. The store was moved to its present site when U.S. 219 was built around 1927, and at its new location had electric lights powered by a private 32-volt generator. This Delco system ran on gasoline in its own building out back. The generator also powered the "Icy Ball" soft drinks cooler. In front of the store were four gravity-fed gas pumps. Gas was pumped up into large glass tanks by hand

Photo of Sharp's Store taken in 1927

shoes, lamp oil, nails, tools and supplies such as horseshoes and fence wire. Sharp's Store offered the only access to many essentials that made living better for the people in this remote rural community. It also provided a social meeting place and a local showcase for the introduction of new styles and fashions.

People naturally drifted into the store to listen to the radio when that electronic marvel made its appearance. L.D. was sure to keep some on display for sale. Some folks found the new gadget hard to believe. Once some men came in and heard a new battery-operated shortwave radio. They left angry, thinking the Sharps had tried to trick them into believing that the sound just came through the air.

Sharp's Country Store is now run by Benny Eduardo and Linda Sharp Eduardo. Linda is L.D.'s granddaughter and the daughter of Dave Sharp, the family historian, who has plenty of stories to tell.

The store is still a gathering place for the locals who find the squeaky wooden floors and the warm coal stove an ideal setting for remembering the old days.

The Eduardo's are keenly aware of the heritage that surrounds them and enjoy sharing their knowledge of local history and the family business.

The store has come to the attention of historians and photographers and was the subject of a story published in 1988 in Goldenseal magazine, excerpts from which were used here.



Store Founder L.D. Sharp at the prime of life. The portrait was made around 1910. (photograph unknown) All photographs courtesy of Sharp.

Country store items are available including maple syrup, nails, flour, oil lamps, gas etc. Sporting goods are in including fishing gear, pistols and ammunition.

So, if you haven't been to Sharp's Country Store, make a point to visit soon and eat a dip of your favorite ice cream. Sharp's Country Store is located 219 miles north of Marlinton.



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Sharp's Store served an area of 15 miles, from Linwood to Elk Mountain. This was a large territory, considering travel conditions at that time. Goods arrived by horse and wagon over rutted dirt roads that were often muddy and treacherous. Men got together for the 60-mile journey to the train depot in Milburn, Virginia, or Beverly in Randolph County. They took food for several days, and heavy shoes to sleep on the ground or to cover their wagons in case of rain.

Before electricity was available, Sharp's Store was lit with oil lanterns. The store was moved to its present site when U.S. 219 was built around 1927, and it is now located on electric lights powered by a private 11-volt generator. This Delex system ran on gasoline in its own building out back. The generator also powered the "Big Ball" soft drinks cooler. In front of the store were four gravity-fed gas pumps. Gas was pumped up into large glass tanks by hand, measured, then drained into the car. When the West Penn Power Company brought in 110-volt electricity in the late 1930s, one of the hand pumps was left in case the power went out. L.D. was not one to take chances on losing business to a thunderstorm.

Like other country stores, Sharp's operated by giving long-term credit to its customers. Farmers could pay only once or twice a year. In spring they would shear their sheep, and in the fall they would sell crops or livestock for cash to pay their bills. Throughout the year the store would provide salt, sugar, coffee, flour, cloth, clothing and

much more. It was a store where the most precious commodity was credit.

Sharp's Country Store is run by Benny Edwards and Linda Sharp Edwards. Linda is L.D.'s granddaughter and the daughter of Dave Sharp, the family head who has plenty of stories to tell.

The store is still a gathering place for the locals who like to spend winter hours and warm and cold weather days remembering the old days.

The Edwards's are happy owners of the building that was built in 1927 and were sharing with knowledge of local history and family tradition.

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founder L.D. Sharp in the prime of life. This portrait was made around 1910. (photographer unknown) All old photographs courtesy Dave Sharp.

Country store items are still available including maple syrup, salt, flour, oil, sugar, gasoline, etc. Sporting goods are in stock including fishing gear, gun, game and ammunition.

So, if you haven't been to the Sharp's Country Store, make it a point to visit soon and see a double dose of your favorite ice cream. Sharp's Country Store is located 1 mile north of Milburn on Rt. 219.



Benny and Linda Sharp Edwards run Sharp's Country Store today. They are joined here by son, Matthew, great-grandson of the founder.



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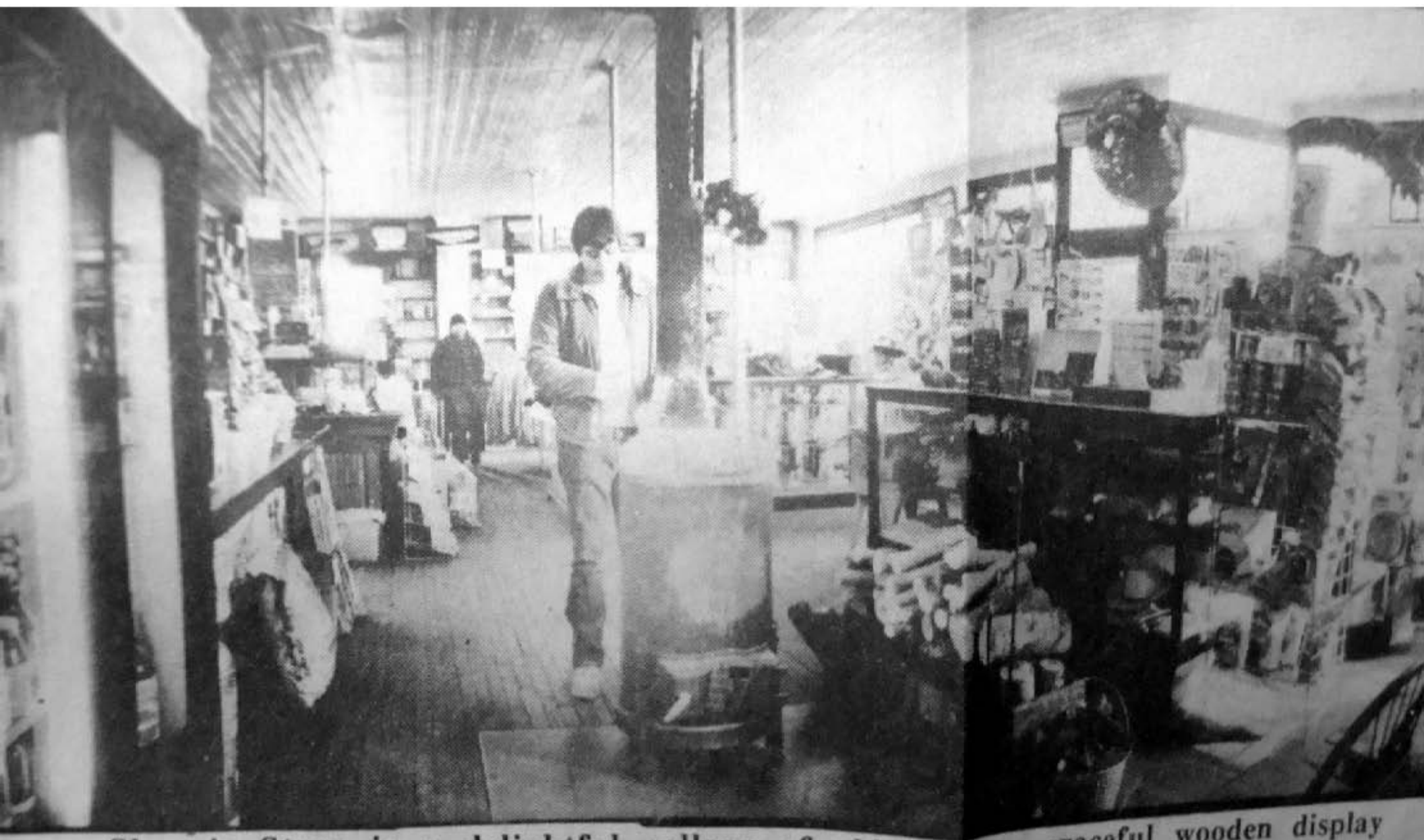
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Sharp's Store is a delightful collage of old artifacts, graceful wooden display cases, flea market items and a cozy wood stove amidst modern convenience store merchandise.



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